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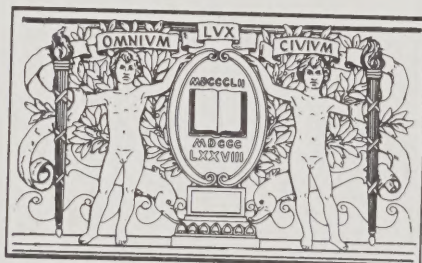
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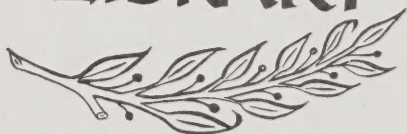
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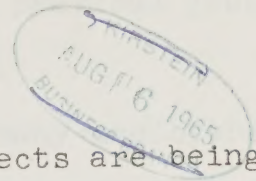


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ABCD AND URBAN RENEWAL



Boston's residential urban renewal projects are being buttressed on a score of fronts by the programs designed and financed by Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.

Within a few months after the city's Redevelopment Authority (BRA) was revamped in 1960 and Development Administrator Edward J. Logue appointed Mayor John F. Collins and his new renewal chief took the first steps to set up an organization which would provide a human dimension to urban renewal.

Today ABCD and the BRA project teams in the South End and Roxbury renewal areas work in partnership to meet not only the social problems inevitably involved in any renewal activity, but those which long preceded physical renewal of those areas. And ABCD's anti-poverty planning has been tied even more closely into residential renewal needs.

The mesh of renewal and social objectives is illustrated in two ABCD training and employment projects.

In Roxbury, it's a case of out-of-school, out-of-work youth needing work experience and a depressed area needing a face-lifting. Although the city's earliest and largest residential project is remaking the face of the community's Washington Park area, the ravages of deterioration and tax delinquency have created unsightly open spaces in other parts of the area.

A statistical portrait of the youth, aged 16 through 21, indicates the nature of their need. About 70 per cent are dropouts;

ACTION FOR BOSTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, INC.
18 THOMSON STREET, BOSTON, MASS. 02110

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about 25 per cent have correctional histories; about the same number need basic remedial reading; few have had previous jobs; a substantial number labor under emotional strains.

"We don't need skill trained youth," say many employers, "We'll do the training. What we do need are youth who know what it is to hold a job, who know the connection between work and remuneration, who know what it is to be at work on time and to work a normal day."

In short, they want job-oriented youth, and here the ABCD Youth Training and Employment Program makes its contribution with its work crews. Working on a stipend basis, under skilled supervisors, the six to ten in each crew tackle a multitude of projects intended to rehabilitate their own neighborhoods. Unsightly lots are turned into neatly landscaped, usable areas, both for recreational purposes and to make the neighborhoods more attractive to live in.

This is an essential part of renewal in a residential community and so too, for example, was the remodeling of an abandoned synagogue by such crews to serve as a BRA project office.

On the other side of downtown Boston - in Charlestown - the employment program is geared to a different group, the 50 to 65 year old bracket, rendered jobless by layoffs along the waterfront and elsewhere.

Here another full-scale renewal effort is around the corner and the older workers will both supplement family incomes and learn

new trades by participating in the rehabilitation of Charlestown properties.

ABCD's major activity during 1964 was launching the Boston Youth Opportunities Project, designed to test ways of reducing delinquency. A large scale demonstration effort, involving 15 separate programs, the Project had dovetailed with renewal needs at numerous points.

The programs are located in the three prime residential renewal areas - - Roxbury, Charlestown and the South End. They include a battery of school programs, ranging from experimental prekindergarten classes for 3 1/2-4 1/2 year-olds to reading and guidance programs for older students. A unified Legal Service Program will provide strengthened defender and legal aid services as well as a bail program and participation by law school students. The Youth Training and Employment Program, also a part of the project, operates intake centers in Roxbury and the South End where youth unemployment is most serious.

In each of these areas are multi-service centers offering a range of services under one roof - - educational, employment, legal, family and individual counseling, health, mental health and others.

The Roxbury center is illustrative. The site of the city's Washington Park Urban Renewal Project, the Roxbury district suffers from a variety of urban ailments. Much of Boston's low rent housing is concentrated there. The school buildings, with few exceptions,

are old, crowded and suffering from the same deterioration that has affected the other properties in the area. The community has less educated and fewer skilled workers, more families of five and six persons, and lower incomes than the rest of the city.

In the past two years approximately 1500 families have been relocated from substandard housing that has been taken for urban renewal purposes. Some 500 more families will be relocated in coming months. This has exposed and intensified many health and welfare problems. The need for accessible and integrated social services to assist families before, during and after relocation, has been particularly pressing. The Roxbury Multi-Service Center represents a significant resource for aiding these families in making a more positive change in their lives.

The Center concentrates on families facing serious problems with respect to employment, physical and mental health, involvement with the courts, child-rearing, home management and other environmental and personal difficulties. It reaches out to families and individuals who have the greatest needs but are the least willing or able to seek out and use help.

A typical program designed to reach out to those it serves is the home development program in Roxbury. Its basic aim is to help tenants of new and old apartments adopt home making practices necessary to the physical maintenance of their properties as well as to their own physical and economic well being. The program serves

tenants in two housing projects - - Charlame and Marksdales - - constructed within the last year in the Washington Park Urban Renewal Project, and tenants of private apartment houses along nearby nearby Holworthy Street within the project area. An important phase of the renewal project is involved here; the prevention of deterioration of existing property. Home visitors and trained home economists, working in close conjunction with Redevelopment Authority staff are charged with carrying out this program.

Bolstering the work of the multi-service centers in three renewal areas are the new school programs, intended to test approaches to education not previously used in Boston's low-income areas. The objective of all the school programs is simply to help youngsters from low-income, depressed areas make the most of new educational opportunities offered by the schools.

On another front an ABCD staff member serves as liaison between the Redevelopment Authority and the Parks and Recreation Department. In a series of conferences Department and BRA staff have worked jointly in developing temporary play areas and in designing new programs and new facilities in Washington Park.

New school planning has also involved joint ABCD, BRA efforts, this time in conjunction with the School Department. The first of several new schools to be built in the city, the school destined for the Humboldt Avenue section of Roxbury is being approached, through these joint efforts in a new way. In this case the school building

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is to be designed to meet the special curriculum requirements of the community, rather than having the curriculum needs squeezed into a building designed along usual academic lines.

Behind all of this programming is the hope that a new generation will emerge in Boston free from economic and social pressures and committed to maintaining and improving the city as a residential community.

The anti-poverty program offers the opportunity to give this objective a new dimension - to extend such programming into all of Boston's renewal planning areas and to develop new and more varied approaches to the social problems that stem from poverty.

ABCD has been designated coordinator of Boston's anti-poverty planning and has submitted a comprehensive package of proposals to the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity worked out for renewal areas by teams on which Redevelopment Authority staff played an essential role.

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